

(c) whether Government are considering to sponsor a India-Pakistan joint research project on freedom struggle in the sub-continent;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) and (c) No, Sir.

(b) Do not arise.

(e) No such proposal is before the Government.

Indo-Pak agreement on academic exchanges

2913. SHRIMATI PREMA CARIAPPA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether India and Pakistan have any agreement on academic exchanges;

(b) if so, how many such exchanges took place during the last two years;

(c) the areas identified for such exchanges;

(d) the nodal agencies involved in such exchanges; and

(e) the steps being taken to further intensify such exchanges?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMATI D. PURANDESWARI): (a) to (e) No formal agreement has been signed for any academic exchanges between India and Pakistan. However, a Working Group on Education set up by the Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission held its first meeting on 20th February 2007 in New Delhi. The meeting identified the following areas for collaboration:

- (i) Cooperation between the countries through exchange of information, joint workshops, seminars, symposia, exploratory visits, training and collaborative research;

- (ii) Linkages in the higher education sector in the areas of Economics, Business Administration, Agriculture, Health, Law, Information Technology, Science and Technical Education;
- (iii) Establishment of institutional linkages, especially through the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan and the University Grants Commission of India;
- (iv) Exchange of printed material on educational development in the two countries;
- (v) Exchange of experiences between National Book Foundation in Pakistan and National Book Trust (NBT) and the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in India for the reproduction of books required for education;
- (vi) Exchange of expertise and experience in the fields of elementary, secondary and adult education.

Target for providing basic education

2914. SHRIMATI SHOBHANA BHARTIA:
SHRIMATI SUPRIYA SULE:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether according to the Economic Survey of India, the country will miss the target for providing basic education to all by 2007 as 70.5 lakh children in the age group of 6-14 were still out of school till March, 2006;

(b) if so, to what extent the budget provision will help in stepping up its effort to achieve it by 2010; and

(c) if so, the concrete steps Government propose to take to achieve this?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRIMD. ALI ASHRAF FATMI): (a) and (b) The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) has made considerable progress in enhancing access to elementary education. From 4.4 crore children who were out of school in 2001, the number came down to 1.34 crore by July-August, 2005 and has further come down to 70.5 lakhs in 2006. This constitutes the "hard to reach" group of children.